

Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian USA)
Order for Worship ~ Baptism of the Lord ~ 11 January 2026

Preparation for Worship:
"Nothing is softer or more flexible than water, yet nothing can resist it."
~Lao Tzu

Prelude

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Paul Manz

Introit

Litany for Baptism of the Lord Sunday:

Leader: In the beginning, darkness covered the deep, and God said: Let there be light.

People: The voice of the Lord is over the waters!

Leader: Through the words of the prophet, the Lord said: When you pass through the waters I will be with you.

People: The voice of the Lord is over the waters!

Leader: Do not fear, says the Lord; I am with you. I have called you by name; you are mine.

People: The voice of the Lord is over the waters!

Leader: When Jesus was baptized by John, suddenly the heavens were opened.

People: The voice of the Lord is over the waters!

Leader: And as Jesus was coming up out of the water, the Spirit of God rested on him like a dove.

People: The voice of the Lord is over the waters!

Leader: And a voice said: You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.

People: The voice of the Lord is over the waters!

Prayer of Adoration:

Mighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit, and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep us, your children born of water and the Spirit, faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

***Hymn 159**

O Sing a Song of Bethlehem

*1 O sing a song of Bethlehem,
of shepherds watching there,
and of the news that came to them
from angels in the air.
The light that shone on Bethlehem
fills all the world today.
Of Jesus' birth and peace on earth
the angels sing alway.*

*2 O sing a song of Nazareth,
of sunny days of joy;
O sing of fragrant flowers' breath,
and of the sinless boy.
For now the flowers of Nazareth
in every heart may grow.
Now spreads the fame of his dear name
on all the winds that blow.*

*3 O sing a song of Galilee,
of lake and woods and hill,
of him who walked upon the sea
and bade its waves be still.
For though, like waves on Galilee,
dark seas of trouble roll,
when faith has heard the Master's word,
falls peace upon the soul.*

4 O sing a song of Calvary,
its glory and dismay,
of him who hung upon the tree,
and took our sins away.
For he who died on Calvary
is risen from the grave,
and Christ, our Lord, by heaven adored,
is mighty now to save.

Call to Prayer

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” Trusting in God’s grace, let us confess our sin.

Gathering Prayer

Merciful God, in baptism you promise forgiveness and new life, making us part of the body of Christ. We confess that we remain preoccupied with ourselves, separated from one another. We cling to destructive habits, hold grudges, and show reluctance to welcome one another. We allow the past to hold us captive. In your loving-kindness, have mercy on us, and free us from sin. Fulfill the promises of our baptism so that we may rise to new life, and live together in grace. [Silent prayers]

Words of Assurance

As a voice from heaven said to Jesus, so God speaks to us: You are my child, my beloved; with you I am well pleased. Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ: in him we are forgiven. Amen.

*The Gloria: Hymn 583

Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest. Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia.

*The Peace

Leader: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

All children from preschool through fourth grade are invited to meet their teachers in the narthex and go to their classes.

Prayer of Illumination

Saving God, source of our calling, your Word is full of power and glory. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that we may receive your grace and live as your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:1-6, 11-12

Leader: Holy wisdom, holy Word.

People: Thanks be to God.

*Hymn 96

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:13-17

Anthem

Sing of God Made Manifest

Carl Daw, Jr, Jakob Hintz, JS Bach

Sermon

“Things We Need to Hear”

Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder

Response

Amen

*Affirmation of Faith

“Credo for Christians”

**I worship and adore God, source, essence, and aim of all things,
Spirit that enlivens all beings.
I follow the way of Jesus, who found God in himself
and shared a way for others to find God in themselves.
He was born through love,
He lived for love,
He suffered for love,**

He died for love,
But love never dies.
I submit myself to the leading of the love that is God,
that I may be compassionate toward all beings,
that I may live and serve in community with others,
that I may ask for and offer forgiveness,
that I may praise and enjoy God forever. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father* who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

*Or "Mother" or "Parent"

Welcome and Next Steps

Offerings and Gifts of Self

Offertory

*The Doxology: Hymn 606, 607 *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow** Old Hundredth
Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below!
Praise God above, ye heavenly host! Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Amen.
*For a gender-neutral version, use hymn 607.

*Prayer of Dedication

*Closing Hymn 488 *I Was There to Hear Your Burning Cry*
1 "I was there to hear your burning cry, I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold.
I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well;
In a blaze of light you wandered off to find where demons dwell."

2 "When you heard the wonder of the Word I was there to cheer you on;
You were raised to praise the living Lord, to whom you now belong.
If you find someone to share your time and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme from dusk 'till rising sun."

3 In the middle ages of your life, not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night, complete what I've begun.
When the evening gently closes in, and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been with just one more surprise."

4 "I was there to hear your burning cry, I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold."

*Charge and Benediction

Exhort

Postlude *Fugue in C Major* Dietrich Buxtehude
Feel free to exit during the postlude, mindful of those who wish to stay and listen